

January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

At the start of this new term, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support as we work together to ensure that our young people excel in their education, fulfil their potential and realise their ambitions. Positive partnerships between parents/carers and St John's staff are key to raising the aspirations and achievements of our students and only by reinforcing our high expectations and standards, will we be able to guide and support our young people, providing them with a quality education to enable them to flourish.

Over the last year St John's has had 2 inspections: Ofsted (January 2019) where we achieved "Good" judgements in all categories, and a Diocesan inspection (October 2019) where we achieved "Outstanding" judgements in all categories. The inspection reports are available on our website and both reports identify the many strengths of our learning community, recognising that we are "ambitious" for our students and create an "aspirational culture" for all. Inspectors commented on the fact that the vast majority of our students are polite, conscientious and are keen to do well.

Whilst we are very proud of what we have achieved at St John's, we continue to strive to secure further improvements as we believe all children are entitled to a high quality education within a supportive community, that guides and challenges students to become the best version of themselves. We are dedicated to helping every child to learn, but poor behaviour from a minority of students affects our positive culture, and disrupts learning. Unfortunately, when we attempt to address poor attitudes with some individuals and their parents, we are met with abuse and unreasonable behaviour. Such responses are becoming an increasing problem and a serious concern for all schools, but this is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at St John's.

The overwhelming majority of our parents and carers are incredibly supportive and we thank you for working with us as we all want the best for your children. Recently, however, our staff are spending a significant proportion of time dealing with emails and phone calls from a small number of parents who question our decisions, try to dictate our policy and become abusive or unco-operative when we try to address the poor attitudes or behaviour of their children. We will not respond to abusive emails or continue with telephone conversations that are rude and confrontational. To the minority of parents who fall into this category, we ask that you:

- accept our high standards and expectations, which you agreed to when you chose St John's for your children, and support us in educating your children
- ensure your children are ready to learn and that they complete all work to the best of their ability
- reinforce with your children that they are responsible for their actions; accepting the consequences helps children to learn from the situation
- recognise that we are here to nurture, guide, help and support all children to grow into respectful, confident, resilient and mature individuals, who are able to make the best out of the academic, vocational and enrichment opportunities provided for them



To those parents/carers who want their children to thrive in St John's caring and positive learning community, thank you for:

- ✓ working with us to find solutions to help your children
- ✓ discussing matters calmly with us so that we can agree positive outcomes
- ✓ appreciating that we all have our parts to play in helping your children to make the most of their education and time at St John's
- ✓ understanding that we make mistakes at times but, when we do, we will apologise and learn from them
- ✓ supporting us by upholding our standards and expectations so that your children feel safe and can benefit from our caring and aspirational community

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

Our standards and expectations regarding uniform have not changed since 2009 but, unfortunately, we are experiencing an increasing number of students, who believe they do not have to follow our uniform code. Skinny/legging or jegging type trousers, jewellery and false nails are not permitted as school uniform. We thank you for your continued support in ensuring that your child attends school every day in the correct uniform so that valuable time is not wasted in discussions with individual students, who wish to "negotiate" or compromise our standards.

To avoid any confusion, please see our expectations below. We would like to remind you that school uniform may be purchased online from Elizabeth's Embroidery ([www.elizabethsembroidery.com](http://www.elizabethsembroidery.com)). Please let us know if you need any assistance in purchasing the appropriate style of trouser or formal footwear.

<i>Uniform Expectations</i>	
✓	Maroon blazer
✓	School tie – eagle below the knot
✓	White shirt – buttoned at the top and tucked in
✓	Black trousers - <a href="http://www.elizabethsembroidery.com">from Elizabeth's Embroidery</a> (No jeans or chinos. <i>"Skinny" trousers, jeans or leggings are not allowed</i> )
✓	Black skirt – <a href="http://www.elizabethsembroidery.com">school style from Elizabeth's Embroidery</a>
✓	Black jumper/tank-top with the school logo in the corner (optional)
✓	<b>Black smart dress shoes or boots (no trainers, plimsolls or canvas shoes)</b>
✓	Girls need to wear black opaque tights and shoes if they choose to wear the school skirt
✓	Coat for outdoor use – breaktime and lunchtime
X	Jewellery, piercings, false nails are not allowed

## STUDENTS' USE OF MOBILE PHONES

Whilst we fully understand the benefits of digital communication, we have a concern regarding students bringing/using mobile phones on and around the school site, particularly as it often distracts students from their learning and can lead to misuse. **We strongly discourage students from bringing their phones into school** but recognise that, from a parent/carer's perspective, you may like the reassurance of being able to contact your child when they are travelling to and from school. In these circumstances, we are prepared to allow mobile phones onto the premises, but they **must** remain out of sight and switched off until the student has left the premises at the end of the school day. Students are fully aware of our expectations and an after-school detention is issued if students have their phone out on site during the school day.

## STUDENTS' WATER BOTTLES

We are continuing to encourage our students to bring in their own reusable water bottles from home, which they can fill up with juice or water from our water-coolers that are located around the school site. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that energy drinks/fizzy pop are not allowed in school due to the unsettling effects these drinks can have on students' concentration and learning.

## WORKING TOGETHER

By working in partnership, we can all support your children with every step on their educational and personal journey. We recognise that there may be challenges and difficulties along the way and not every issue is straightforward, but we are here to listen, discuss and help. Thank you for your continued support and attendance at Progress Evenings, meetings and events where we welcome the opportunities to discuss your children's progress and celebrate their achievements with you.

We would like to thank you for your support, trust and understanding with these matters as such letters are often difficult to write and to read. If you feel that you need any further clarification on any of these points, please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss them in more detail.

Please be reassured that St John's continues to be a special place to grow and learn and, by working together, we can ensure that all children in our care will live life to the full, becoming the best version of themselves.

Yours sincerely,

**Lisa Byron**  
Headteacher

**Chris Parker**  
Deputy Headteacher